REMARKS

This amendment is intended to be fully responsive to the Office Action having a mailing date of February 9, 2005. Claims 1, 3, 18, 21 and 24 have been amended to address the Examiner's objection to claim 3 and rejection of claims 1, 18, 21, and 24 under 35 USC §112, without narrowing the scope of the claims. Claims 7 and 10 were amended to address minor typographical errors. Claims 1- 27 are currently pending. Applicants submit that no new matter has been added by this amendment and that support for the amendment may be found throughout the specification and drawings.

Rejection of claims 1, 18, 21 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1, 18, 21 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being unpatentable for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter. Claims 1, 18, 21 and 24 have been amended to address the Examiner's rejection under §112 without narrowing the scope of the claims. Applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 1, 18, 21 and 24 are now allowable over the Examiner's §112 rejection.

Rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,484,561 to *Matthews*. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended Claim 1 recites, "[A]n apparatus for minimizing interruption of communications on a first communications link between a central office and a customer premises telephonic device in response to activation of local loop generation equipment, the apparatus comprising: a second communications link between the local loop generation equipment and the central office; a processing mechanism at the central office coupled to the second communications link and adapted to determine under what circumstances the customer premises telephonic device will be notified over the first communications link in response to the activation of local loop generation equipment." Claims 2 and 3 also recite, among other things, "a second telephone line between local loop generation equipment and the central office," and "a second telephone line between doorbell answering equipment and the central office," respectively. Similarly, independent claims 18 – 20 are method claims that recite, among other things, "a second communications link between local loop generation equipment and the central office."

Matthews does not disclose "a second communications link" between local loop generation equipment and the central office. Contrary to the Examiner's position, *Matthews* discloses that, "[c]ontacts LS12, LS13, LS14, and LS15 operate to switch the subscriber line R11, T11 through the common equipment." (See Col. 4, lines 38-40) There is no disclosure or teaching in *Matthews* with regard to contacts LS12 and LS13 being operative to establish a second communications link between the central office and the common switching equipment (CSW) as asserted in the Office Action. Applicants submit that the disclosure of *Matthews* teaches that LS12 and LS13 cooperate with LS14 and LS15 to establish a local loop between the CSW and one of a plurality of subscriber lines while preventing disruption of a call already in progress on the respective subscriber line. However, there is no disclosure of a second communications link being establihed between the CSW and the central office.

Further, it is asserted that at Col. 6, lines 18-66 that *Matthews* discloses, "a processing mechanism at the central office coupled to the second communications link and adapted to determine under what circumstances the customer premises telephonic device will be notified over the first communications link in response to activation of local loop generation equipment", as according to Claim 1. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Col. 6, lines 18-66 of *Matthews* describes what happens when a door caller encounters a busy subscriber line. In this scenario, the CSW operates to generate and deliver a call waiting tone to the subscriber line whereby the occupant may choose to terminate the current call or to place the current call on hold to answer the door call. There is no disclosure of a processing mechanism at the central office that makes a determination as to when a subscriber on a current call will be notified of a door call as recited in the claims. Claims 1-20 are clearly distinguihed from the prior art by providing a first loop between the central office and the customer premises telephonic device and a second loop between the local loop generation circuit and the central office. The second loop allows for the central office to receive a call signal from the local loop generation circuit, and then decide whether to interrupt the housing unit. Therefore, the housing unit is not automatically interrupted. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, claims 1-20 embody patentable subject matter and it is respectfully requested that the claims be passed to issue.

Rejection of claims 21, 24 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner rejected claims 21, 24 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in light of U.S. Patent No. 3,484,561 to *Matthews*. Applicant respectfully traverses.

Amended claims 21, 24 and 27 recite, among other things, the use of a phone dialing mechanism to place a telephone call wherein the telephone call causes a notification to be sent from a central office to a telephonic device at the occupant premises. *Matthews* does not disclose or teach a phone dialing mechanism that causes a notification to be sent from a central office to a telephonic device at the occupant premises. *Matthews* teaches a phone dialing mechanism that is connectable to telephonic devices stationed at occupant premises by way of the CSW (See Matthews Col. 3, lines 55-57). By using a telephone call to notify the occupant through the central office, the claimed invention excludes any local loop created between the visitor and the customer premises. Instead, the telephone call creates a communication loop between the visitor and the central office, and if accepted, a second loop is created between the central office and the customer premises. As discussed above, *Matthews* teaches a direct local loop between the visitor and the customer premises, thereby not teaching the elements of the invention claimed in Claims 21, 24 and 27. Accordingly, for the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 21, 24 and 27 are in condition for allowance.

Rejection of claims 22-23 and 25-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner rejected claims 22-23 and 25-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over *Matthews* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,428,388 to Von Bauer et al. For the reasons set forth above, Applicant submits that claims 22-23 and 25-26 are in a condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

For at least the above reasons, this application is in condition for allowance. It is believed that any additional fees due with respect to this paper have already been identified in any transmittal accompanying this paper.

However, if any additional fees are required in connection with the filing of this paper that are not identified in any accompanying transmittal, permission is given to charge Deposit Account No. 07-2347, under Order No. 00-VE12.18. If the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is kindly urged to call the undersigned to facilitate prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: May 9, 2005

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